

VICAR GENERAL'S OFFICE

The Bishop's Office is in transition due to the retirement of Mary Frick, Executive Secretary. Beginning February 3 Colleen Darland, administrative assistant for the Vocations Office will be assisting callers and visitors until a new secretary is hired. We ask for your patience and understanding during this time.

MERCY IN MOTION: A MINISTRIES OF MERCY CONFERENCE

In observance of the Year of Mercy, the Diocese of Davenport will be hosting *Mercy in Motion: A Ministries of Mercy Conference* on Saturday, July 30 at St. Ambrose University in Davenport. Guided by keynote speaker Tom East from the Center for Ministry Development, the faithful of the diocese are invited to reflect upon our call to be a Church of Mercy. The conference will feature a ministry fair with representatives from numerous local organizations and parish programs. Attendants will also be able to participate in a variety of breakout sessions focused on how to develop and maintain various "ministries of mercies" within their parishes and how to be involved as "merciful ministers" with organizations or ministries that implement works of mercy in the community. Please contact Marianne Agnoli, agnolim@davenportdiocese.org if you have any questions or if you or one of your parish organizations are interested in providing information at the ministry fair.

STEWARDSHIP OFFICE

Best Practices in Parish Stewardship—Tips from the Diocesan Stewardship Commission to effectively promote stewardship in the local community. *Start the children in your community on a life-long path to stewardship by providing children's offering envelopes. There are many options available commercially, but choose those that include space for sharing time and talent as well as money. When the collection begins at Mass invite children to come to the sanctuary to place their gifts in a special basket held by the celebrant or placed in a visible location. Be sure to educate families that the idea is not to raise more money, but to teach children the joy of giving. Any money enclosed should come from the child's own funds rather than the parent's wallet. Whether or not there is a monetary gift enclosed, reports on the sharing of time and talent should be encouraged. Periodically highlight in the bulletin or newsletter the outstanding acts of stewardship reported.*

Stewardship Day 2016:

Stewardship Day will be held April 7, 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at St. Patrick Church, Iowa City. Bishop Robert Gruss of Rapid City, South Dakota will speak on *Spirituality of Stewardship* and Tracy Welliver from Liturgical Publications, Inc. will present *Practice of Stewardship in the Parish*. Registration fee is \$15 and the deadline is March 31. See the attached flyer for more information and the link to the online registration form. For questions contact Dan Ebener, ebener@davenportdiocese.org, 563-888-4251 or Laurie Hoefling, hoefling@davenportdiocese.org or 563-888-4220.

SOCIAL ACTION OFFICE

CRS Rice Bowl Collection:

The last Kick-off breakfast will be held Saturday, February 13 at St. Mary, Albia from 9-11 a.m.

- We will share a simple rice bowl breakfast and information on how to make for a successful Rice Bowl campaign and collection.
- We will hear from CRS Rice Bowl grant recipients, folks across the Diocese who have used the 25% that stays here to support hunger programs.
- We encourage each parish to have either a one-person, or two-person Rice Bowl promoter team. And we will provide a Fair Trade shirt to these parish promoters.
- To register e-mail Kent Ferris, ferris@davenportdiocese.org.

Collection begins Ash Wednesday, February 10. If you need materials contact Kent Ferris, ferris@davenportdiocese.org. Remember that 25% of the funds collected will remain in the Diocese to help organizations that fight hunger and poverty.

Income Tax Help: The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. To learn more and to find a location in your area go to:

<https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers>

2016/2017 Internship for Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD): Applications are now being accepted until Feb. 15. Are you Catholic? Interested in fighting poverty? Then consider being an intern for CCHD. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development:

- Provides grants for self-help projects developed by grassroots groups working to address the root causes of poverty in their communities.
- Works to increase Catholics' awareness of poverty in the U.S.
- Educates about the Catholic social tradition.
- Builds bridges between poor and non-poor communities.

Intern must be able to attend the June 1-3 CCHD Training (expenses paid). For more information go to <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/socialaction/sacchdinternship.htm> or contact Loxi Hopkins, 563-888-4212 or hopkins@davenportdiocese.org.

Pacem in Terris Local Celebration: Join Bishop Amos celebrating the work of Thich Nhat Hanh, Saturday, April 2, 4 p.m. at St. Ambrose University, Christ the King Chapel.

Project Rachel: Project Rachel is a confidential, post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church offering hope and healing to women and men hurting from past abortions. Project Rachel staff understand the emotional pain that follows an abortion. Brochures are available by contacting Loxi Hopkins, hopkins@davernportdiocese.org. Local Helpline: 563-888-4107. E-Mail: projectrachel@diodav.org

Social Action E-Newsletter: The Diocesan Social Action office has a newsletter filled with upcoming events and deadlines, calls to action and social justice news and views. You can view previous issues or subscribe to *The Two Feet* newsletter at <http://bit.ly/1mY1moJ> or send an e-mail to kerstena@diodav.org. Please feel free to submit any parish event for inclusion in our monthly newsletter.

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

The Church is Young – A National Conversation to Mobilize Pastoral Ministry with Young Catholics: The timeline for having the conversations associated with this project has been extended to February 15, and the deadline for uploading the reports from those conversations is now February 20. For more information on this important project, visit [The Church is Young diocesan website](http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/churchisyounghtm) (<http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/churchisyounghtm>).

Scout Sunday: The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting will host the Bishop's Mass for Scouting on Sunday, February 28 at 2:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Bishop Amos will preside. This Mass celebrates Catholic Scouting, including Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls and Boys. All Catholic Scouts, leaders and friends and families of Scouting are welcome. This celebration also acknowledges Catholic Scouts who have recently earned their Catholic Religious Emblem Awards. There will be a brief reception following Mass in the lower level of the Parish Center. Please RSVP by February 24 with your names and numbers attending to Denise McMonagle, dccs@diodav.org. Come and celebrate the gift that Catholic Scouting is to the Church!

MINISTRY FORMATION PROGRAM

Basic Schedule

2/20/16: Reconciliation/Anointing , Fr. Paul Appel	3/19/16: Eucharist I , Dr. Corrine Winter
4/16/16: Eucharist II , Dr. Corrine Winter	5/21/16: Cultural Diversity , Miguel Moreno & Guest
6/16/16: Matrimony , Dc. Frank & Marianne Agnoli	7/16/16: Holy Orders , Bishop Amos, Fr. Thom Hennen & Deacon David Montgomery
8/20/16: Personal/Pastoral , IlaMae Hanisch	9/17/16: Catholicism , Dr. Corrine Winter
10/8/16: Commissioning Liturgy , Location TBA	

On-Site Format: All courses held at the Diocese of Davenport, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. **DVD/YouTube Format:** The order of courses is as stated above; however each group will determine its monthly meeting time. Application form and additional information may be found on the diocesan website, www.davenportdiocese.org (Chancery-Faith Formation-Lay Ministry-MFP Forms). For information regarding the courses or the Ministry Formation Program contact John Valenti, valenti@davenportdiocese.org or 563-888-4244.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

National Marriage Week – February 7-14, 2016

The following resources are available through the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth to help celebrate and live the great gift of married life in your parish and home.

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/national-marriage-week.cfm>

- **Preaching Resource for World Marriage Sunday** (February 14): reflections on the Scriptures of the day to assist clergy in preaching about marriage.
- **Bulletin insert** about the social benefits of marriage: one-page front and back, available in color or in black and white.
- **Three options for a Seven-day virtual marriage retreat:**
 - **“Marriage and Mercy”** retreat, themed to fit with the year-long Jubilee of Mercy; <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/upload/Virtual-Marriage-Retreat-2016-Marriage-and-Mercy.pdf>
 - **“A Marriage Retreat with Pope Francis”** based on his advice about marriage and family life; <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/marriage-retreat-2-a-retreat-with-pope-francis/>
 - **“Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan”** based on the USCCB pastoral letter, <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/marriage-retreat-1-marriage-love-and-life-in-the-divine-plan/>

If you are on **Facebook**, you can join the virtual marriage retreat event by visiting the **For Your Marriage Facebook page** and clicking on More --> Events **coming soon**.

<https://www.facebook.com/foryourmarriage>

Looking for **more resources** to strengthen your marriage, or advice for dating and engaged couples? Visit the **For Your Marriage** website, <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/>, En Español, **Por Tu Matrimonio**, <http://www.portumatrimonio.org/>

Marriage & Family Enrichment Pilot Project: The Diocese of Davenport in coordination with John Bosio (author of *Happy Together: The Catholic Blueprint for a Loving Marriage* and *Blessed is Marriage: A Guide to the Beatitudes for Catholic Couples*) is inviting parishes in the diocese to pilot a new enrichment program: **Four Dates for Catholic Couples – the Virtues**. This innovative program will be made available free of charge to any parish participating in the Spring Pilot and has the potential of reaching not only the couples in your parish attending the four dates, but also those in the pews and beyond. Please contact Marianne Agnoli at 563-888-4242 or agnolim@davenportdiocese.org for more details concerning this enriching opportunity for your parish.

Spanish-Speaking Sponsor Couple Training Workshop: Saturday, March 5, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Chancery in Davenport. Juan and Rita Guerra will offer instruction to Spanish-speaking couples willing to serve as Sponsor Couples in their parishes. For more information (in English) contact Marianne Agnoli: agnolim@davenportdiocese.org. For more information (in Spanish) contact Miguel Moreno: moreno@davenportdiocese.org.

Entrenamiento para la preparación de Matrimonios en Español: Juan y Rita Guerra ofrecerán instrucción en español a todas las parejas interesadas en servir como instructores en sus parroquias. El entrenamiento será el sábado 5 de marzo del 2016 de 9:00am a 4:00pm en la Cancillería en Davenport. Para información en inglés contacte a Marianne Agnoli: agnolim@davenportdiocese.org. Para información en español contacte a Miguel Moreno: moreno@davenportdiocese.org.

Marriage and Parenting Resource: Attached is the February issue of “Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers.” These may be used in parish bulletins or as links on parish websites.

Marriage Preparation:

The Diocese of Davenport offers several marriage preparation program formats: Sponsor Couple (through your parish), One-day, Weekend (two-day), and Online (under special circumstances-with parish approval).

Sponsor Couple: It is preferred that those preparing for marriage meet with a trained parish Sponsor Couple. Contact Marianne Agnoli at agnolim@davenportdiocese.org to schedule a training in your parish.

Weekend and One-day:

February 27, 2016: Bettendorf, St. John Vianney, registration *deadline is February 19*

April 23-24, 2016: Williamsburg, St. Mary, registration *deadline is April 15*

August 6-7, 2016: Mt. Pleasant, St. Alphonsus, registration *deadline is July 29*

The current fee is \$125 per couple and is now also payable by credit card/PayPal. Please note that this fee will increase to \$150 for registrations received after July 1, 2016.

The registration form and more information can be found on the diocesan website at <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/Marriage%20and%20Family.htm>. If you have questions contact Barb Butterworth, 563-888-4240, butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org.

Online: Go to <http://www.marriageministries.com/courses/catholic-marriage-prep-class/>. – to be used only under special circumstance with parish approval.

Natural Family Planning Links:

Billings Ovulation Method NFP course is available on line at <http://learnnfponline.com>. A certificate of completion will be issued.

Couple to Couple League (Sympto-thermal) Method offers two on-line options for those couples who do not have a local teaching couple, or for those whose schedule prevents them from attending a local instruction. Couples will receive the same materials as those attending any on-site class, plus have access to professional chart reviews until confident in their method skills.

- Live Class Online (check website below for dates and times) - \$130
- Self-paced Online - \$99
- <http://ccli.org/productsservices/nfp-instruction/home-study-course.php>

Engaged couples are encouraged to begin NFP instruction at least four to six months prior to the wedding date.

Additional NFP contacts information can be found on the diocesan website, <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/Marriage%20and%20Family.htm>

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

To report child abuse contact: Iowa Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: 800-362-2178 and if it involves clergy or church personnel also notify Alicia Owens, Victim Assistance Coordinator: 563-349-5002, vac@diodav.org or PO Box 232, Bettendorf, IA 52722-0004.

FUND-RAISER FOR OUR LADY OF THE PRAIRIE RETREAT

Rooted in Love: The Life and Martyrdom of Sister Dorothy Stang: Thursday, Mar. 10 | 7pm at St. Ambrose University. A one-woman play about Dorothy Stang, an American nun, who was murdered in Brazil because of her efforts to protect the rainforest and its people from disastrous and often illegal exploitation by logging firms and ranchers. Co-sponsored by St. Ambrose University environmental studies and campus ministry in support of programs at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat. Fee: \$10. Sister Nancy Murray, OP

IOWA CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

Faith for the Journey, the 4th annual Iowa Catholic Men's Conference will be held March 5 at St. Francis of Assisi in West Des Moines. Join Bishop Pates and hundreds of Men of Christian Faith as we share our Journey of Faith. Nationally known and locally known speakers will challenge us and encourage us to be

strong in our faith and to lead our families. Fee \$25 before Feb. 8; \$35 thereafter. To register and for more information go to <http://iowacatholicmensconference.com>.

OUR LADY OF THE PRAIRIE RETREAT, WHEATLAND

To register contact: 563-336-8414 or olpretreat@gmail.com. All programs include a delicious homemade meal prepared with local and organic ingredients. To learn more about Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat visit www.chmiowa.org.

Come to the Quiet: The Gift of Hope: Tues, February 16 | 9:30am – 3:30pm. The gift of hope keeps us going during both difficult times and ordinary times. With hope in our hearts, we truly believe that all will be well and all good things will come in God’s time. Fee: \$20. Kathleen Storms, SSND

Lenten Taize’ Vigil Service: Wed, February 24 | 6:30pm. Taize is an ecumenical movement, drawing Christians of all denominations together in unified and compassionate prayer. All people of faith are invited to participate. Pre-registration encouraged. No fee.

Come to the Quiet: The Gift of Awe and Wonder: Monday, Mar. 14 | 9:30am – 3:30pm. At the end of this month we celebrate Easter; the time of awe and wonder in the fulfillment of promises proclaimed in the Resurrection. Fee: \$20. Pat Shea

The Enneagram...A Tool for Deepening Understanding of Ourselves and Others: Tuesday, Mar. 15 | 9am – 4pm. You will have an experiential introduction to the nine personalities of the enneagram. Through the characteristics of each type and in this process you may discover your own type. Fee: \$30. Meg Bolish and Alice Martin

Women of Mercy: A Retreat for Women: Mar. 18 – 19 | Friday, 5pm – Saturday, 4pm. The art of Michael McGrath has given the quality of mercy a human face, a sisterhood of hard-working women—from Teresa of Avila to Thea Bowman—who continue to inspire today. This presentation will combine Brother Mickey's art with a reflection on what mercy means, and how these women embody it. The spiritual and corporal works of mercy will take on new meaning and relevance. Fee: \$125. Kathy Coffey, Author of “Women of Mercy” (kathycoffey.com)

BENET HOUSE RETREAT CENTER/ST. MARY MONASTERY, ROCK ISLAND, IL

Contact Sr. Jackie Walsh, OSB at 309-283-2108, retreats@smmsisters.org or online at www.smmisters.org/retreats/retreats-and-programs to register for programs mentioned below.

Girls Be a Catholic Sister for a Day: Feb. 6, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Attention girls entering 5th - 8th grades: Spend a fun-filled day at St. Mary Monastery. This great day includes meeting our sisters, prayers, arts and crafts, games, friends and food. You are sure to enjoy this day! Meet new friends and learn how wonderful a life focused on God can be! Fee: There is no cost; you are our guest! For information contact Sr. Stefanie MacDonald, OSB (309) 283-2300 or vocation@smmsisters.org.

Valentine’s Evening: Marriage - Drawing Closer to God: Fri., Feb. 12, 6:30–9:30 pm. What if God designed marriage to make us holy, more than to make us happy? Come learn more about how your marriage can become a doorway to a closer walk with God, and a light to the world around you. Facilitators: Bob and Jan Gull.; Registration fee: \$30/couple. Couples may stay overnight at Benet House for an additional \$65.

Catholic Princess Retreat: Sat., Feb. 20, 9am – 3pm. The retreat is designed to instill in girls from kindergarten - 4th grade a sense of their dignity as daughters of the King, and to remind them of their beauty and honor as heirs to the Kingdom of God. The retreat will teach the girls that every person is made in the image and likeness of God, with a unique personal beauty. Fee: There is no cost; you are our guest! For information contact Sr. Stefanie MacDonald, OSB (309) 283-2300 or vocation@smmsisters.org.

Men’s Retreat: This is my Commandment: Love One Another: Fri., Mar. 18, (Check-in: 6:30-6:45 pm; Conference: 7 pm) 7 pm–Sun., Mar. 20, 12 pm. Part of our faith journey is discovering how to put into practice John 15:13, “A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.” Our discussions will investigate the Lord’s command. Presenter: Rev. Michael Schaab. Fee: Register and pay in full by Feb. 18: \$200 (private room), \$185 (shared room). Registrations after Feb.18: \$210 (private room), \$195 (shared room). Commuter fee: \$130, includes lunch, dinner and brunch.

Catholic Sister for a Day: Mar 5 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Experience life as a Benedictine Sister with other single Catholic women 10-50 years old. Enjoy prayer, meals and conversation with Sisters. Join the Benedictines as they serve God with personal and communal prayer and hear about the process of discernment and Benedictine life. Join us for one or more of the following weekends and take the step you need to discover whether God is calling you to religious life. Fee: There is no cost; you are our guest! For information contact Sr. Stefanie MacDonald, OSB (309) 283-2300 or vocation@smmsisters.org.

SHALOM SPIRITUALTY CENTER, DUBUQUE

To register call 563-582-3592 or send check payable to Shalom Spirituality Center with your contact information to: 1001 Davis St., Dubuque, IA 52001. www.shalomretreats.org, info@shalomretreats.org

Retreat: Dying With Christ, Rising With Christ: Facilitator: Fr. Donald Goergen, O.P.

Two Retreat Options: Option 1: One Day Retreat — on February 10, from 9am to 4pm. Option 2: Three Day Retreat — Wednesday, February 10, 9am to Friday, February 12, 1pm. Lent is an opportune time to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ. What does new life in Christ mean for us? Lent prepares the way. Easter celebrates the gift. If we do not die with him, we will not be raised with him. We gather to contemplate the mystery together. Includes daily Eucharist.

Fr. Goergen is a Dominican priest, teacher, lecturer, and author. He currently teaches at the Aquinas Institute in St. Louis, MO. He has given retreats in Asia, Africa, and throughout North America. Fr. Goergen has published many books and articles. His most recent will be *St. Dominic: The Story of a Preaching Friar*, releasing in 2016 by Paulist Press.

Option 1 (Ash Wednesday Retreat, One Day) Offering: \$50 — includes lunch. Option 2 (Three-Day Retreat) Offering: Overnighters — \$140 and Commuters — \$105. Includes 3 lunches & 2 dinners. Additional overnight stay on Friday night with Saturday breakfast: \$42. Register by Friday, February 5. \$50 nonrefundable deposit required. Indicate choice of 1-day or 3-day retreat at registration.

Self-Renewal Day: Thursday February 18, 9am to 3:30pm. Shalom welcomes you to a peaceful place to rest and relax. Come for a day enjoying two 30-minute holistic services of your choice, a private guest room, a delicious lunch, walking the labyrinth, adult coloring, and space to “just be.” Opening Reflection at 9am: Judy Sinnwell OSF on “Connecting Body, Soul, Spirit to Healthy Living.” Choose two from the following: Massage, Reflexology, Spiritual Direction, Stress Reduction Through Mindfulness. Offering: \$85 includes private room, lunch, meditation talk, two holistic services, adult coloring, labyrinth. Register & prepay by Monday, Feb 15. Indicate your two choices when registering. Register early to ensure your choices.

Embracing Life After the Death of a Spouse or Significant Other: February 20, 8:30am to 3pm. Gather with others who have lost a loved one and share experiences of loss, grief, and healing. Topics include: coping with loss, making adjustments, dealing with fears, surviving and thriving. Offering: \$40, includes lunch and snacks. Register & prepay by Wednesday, February 17.

To support the ministry of your parish, school and the diocese these groups automatically receive the *Mini-Messenger*:

Deacons	Diocesan Corporate Board	Youth Ministers	Pastoral Associates	Directors/Coordinators of Faith Formation
Parishes	Catholic Foundation Board	Sisters	RCIA Parish Contacts	Diocesan Liturgical Commission
Priests	Parish Lay Directors	Bookkeepers	Diocesan Board of Education	Diocesan Planning Commission
Seminarians	Diocesan Pastoral Council	Principals	Parish Life Coordinators	

Other interested persons are welcome to subscribe. If you have questions regarding your subscription contact Laurie Hoefling, hoefling@davenportdiocese.org.

Stewardship Day 2016

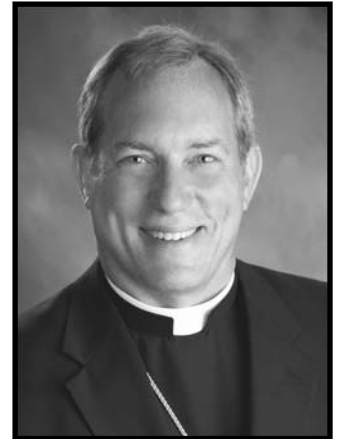
April 7, 9:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

St. Patrick Church, Iowa City

Spirituality of Stewardship

Presented by Bishop Robert D. Gruss, Rapid City, SD

Formerly a priest of the Diocese of Davenport



9:30 Registration
10:00 Prayer & Welcome by Bishop Amos
10:30 Presentation by Bishop Gruss
11:45 Lunch
12:45 Presentation by Tracy Welliver
2:00 Dismissal

\$15 fee, includes lunch and materials

To register go to:

https://diodav.formstack.com/forms/stewardship_day_2016

Registration deadline is March 31



Practice of Stewardship in the Parish

Presented by Tracy Welliver

A Catholic speaker, author, teacher, and stewardship coach with over 20 years experience in parish ministry. He is currently the Director of Parish Community and Engagement for Liturgical Publications, Inc., having previously served for 22 years as Pastoral Associate at Saint Pius X Catholic Church in Greensboro, NC.

Sponsored by the Diocese of Davenport and Liturgical Publications, Inc. (LPi). Displays from LPi, Our Sunday Visitor, Catherine of Siena Institute *Called and Gifted Discernment Process*, Sacred Heart Parish, Newton and other ministries will be available to browse.

For questions contact:

Dan Ebener: ebener@davenportdiocese.org, 563-888-4251

Laurie Hoefling: hoefling@davenportdiocese.org, 563-888-4220

The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting
of the Diocese of Davenport
invites all Catholic Scouts, leaders & their families to

The Bishop's Mass for Scouting

Sunday, 28th of February 2016

at 2 pm

at Sacred Heart Cathedral

422 East 10th Street

Davenport, Iowa

This Mass will celebrate Scouting: Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls & Boys, & American Heritage Girls. Please come in uniform. There will be an acknowledgment of Scouts who have earned Catholic Religious Emblems. A brief reception will follow in the lower level of the Parish Center. Please join us to celebrate Scouting & the gift it is to our Church.

Please RSVP to
Denise McDonagle at dccs@diodav.org

Marriage Moments & Parenting Pointers
February 2016

FOR MORE extended marriage and parenting articles, plus archived Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers, go to: www.SusanVogt.net ***BLOG:** *Living Lightly.* www.SusanVogt.net/blog

TWITTER: [@Vogt_Susan](https://twitter.com/Vogt_Susan) ***EDUCATORS, LEADERS, & MINISTERS:** You are welcome to reprint these MM's and PP's in bulletins, newsletters, and on your website with proper credit, (By Susan Vogt, www.SusanVogt.net). When used on a website, please also link to my website: www.SusanVogt.net

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

661. Feb. 1: "Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury...It endures all things. Love never fails. (1 Cor. 13:4-8) This scripture is often used at weddings. Make it live again in your marriage, no matter how long you've been wed.

662. Feb. 8: Mardi Gras allows us a last fling before the Lenten penitential season. Do something frivolous together today. Eat something decadent, give each other a massage, wear wild make-up, enjoy being foolish. If you're the uptight type, let go. You'll have six weeks to exercise your over-responsible side.

663. Feb. 15: Valentine's Day is Feb. 14 but its spirit can be celebrated any day. Repeat your vows to each other today, "I _____, again take you, _____, to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." Bonus points if you memorize it.

663. Feb. 22: It's Lent - a time of taking stock, self-sacrifice, and penance. Take stock of your marriage this week. Is there a sacrifice you can make for your beloved? Anything it's time to forgive?

664. Feb. 29: (Leap Day) Feb. 29 is Leap Day. In matters of courtship, historically men took the lead and pursued women. Of course our society is now more egalitarian. Women are more assertive, ask men out for dates, and even propose. Is it a leap for you to accept this change or does it seem natural?

PARENTING POINTERS

662. Feb.5: Ash Wednesday is February 10. Prepare for Lent by talking with your family about how this can be a time of generosity and mercy (forgiveness). For the next 7 weeks, I'll give you ideas about how your family can live more simply. Use this week to think of your own.

663. Feb. 12: Week 1: Letting go of stuff. I don't need to fill another's need is a foundational Christian virtue. Is there one toy or amusement that I'm willing to pass on to someone who would appreciate it? (a younger sibling, a neighbor, a stranger...)

664. Feb. 19: Week 2: It's still pretty cold in the northern hemisphere. Does your household have an extra pair of gloves, a scarf, boots, a coat, a blanket that you could take to a homeless shelter, Goodwill, etc. Do it this week.

665. Feb. 26: Week 3: Assuming that everyone in your family has enough clothes, have each person pick one piece of clothing that you wear indoors to give away.